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(54) **AUTOMATIC BABY CARRIER ROCKING DEVICE**

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A47D 9/04 (2006.01)

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CPC ***A47D 9/04*** (2013.01)

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USPC 297/118, 133, 258.1, 260.2
See application file for complete search history.

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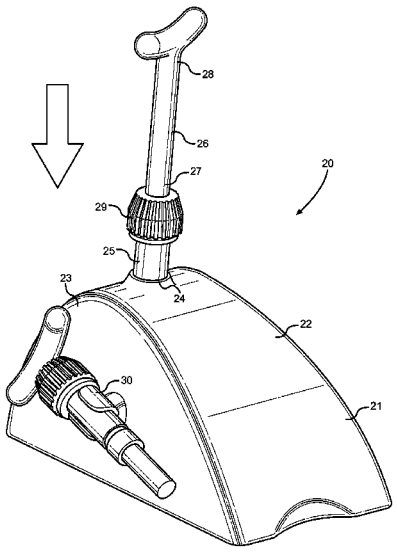
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention describes a baby carrier rocking device. In one embodiment, the device includes a housing with an imbedded motor, MP3 player, and related components. The housing may feature various shapes and designs, and comprises an aperture at the top portion thereof. The aperture is adapted to hold a first end of an elongated arm therein. The second end of the elongated arm is adapted to rock a baby carrier. In operation, the motor actuates the elongated arm so that it extends upward at a regular interval, contacting a baby carrier and thereby pushing the same in a rocking motion. Each time the elongated arm is extended upward, it falls back down via gravity. In this way, the present invention provides parents or caregivers with a hands-free way to rock a baby carrier.

14 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



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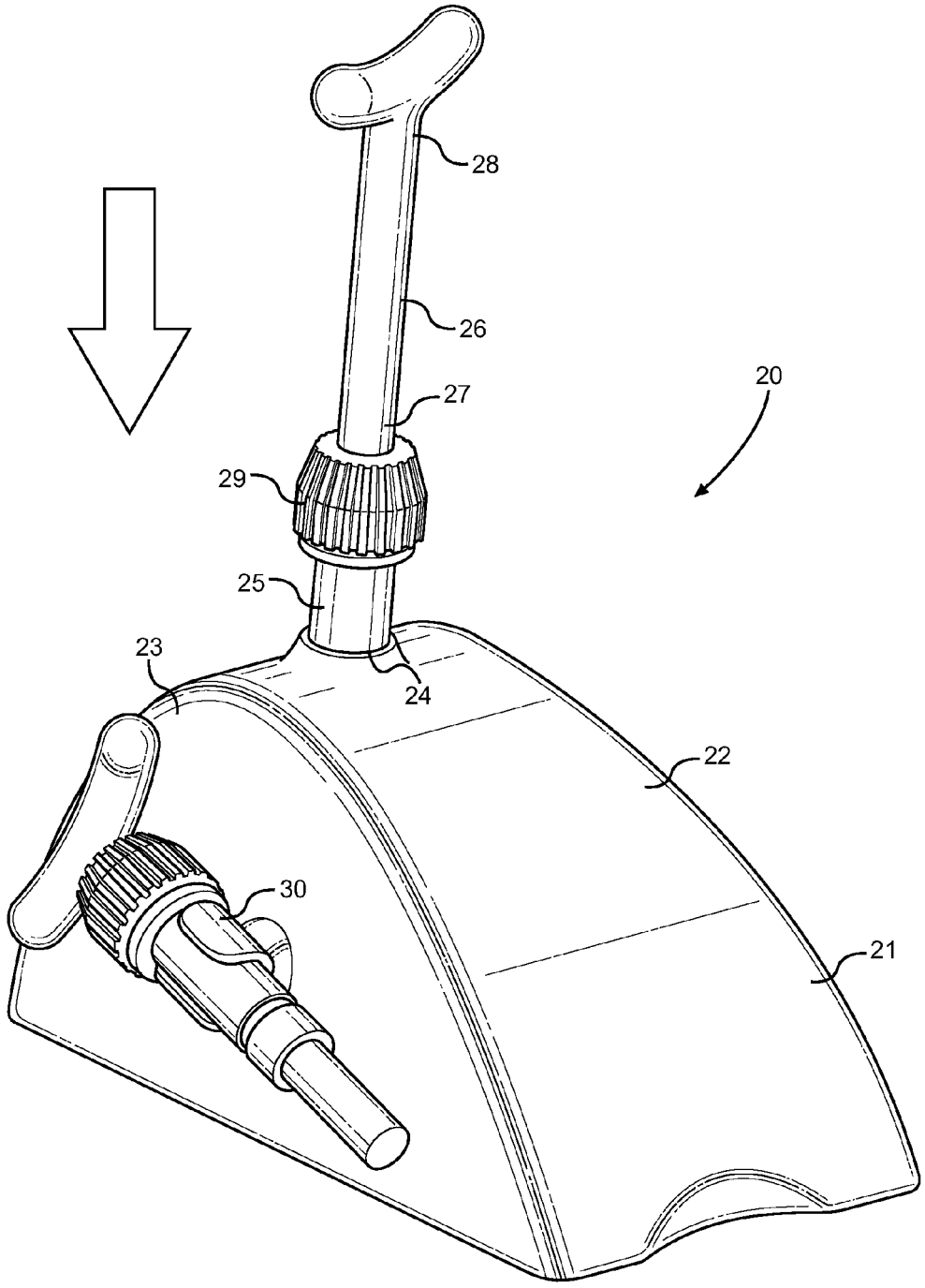

FIG. 1

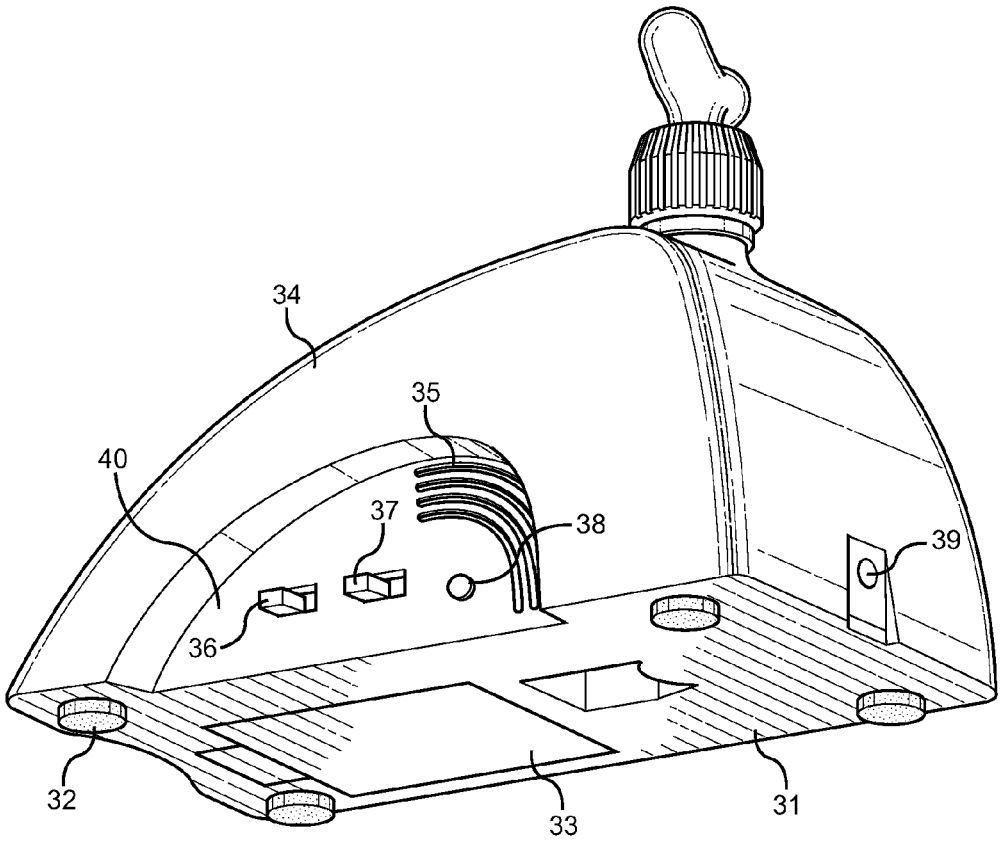

FIG. 2

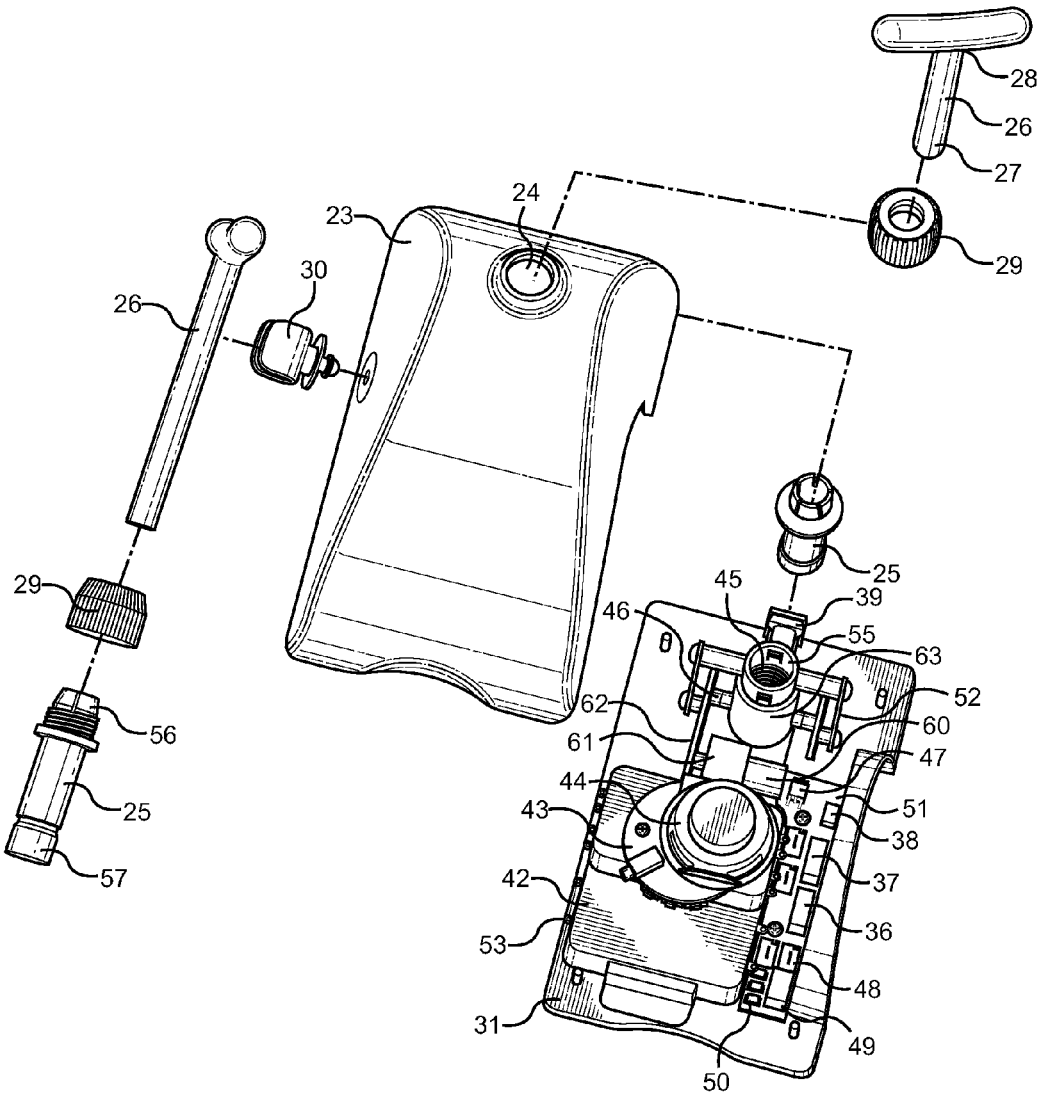
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FIG. 3

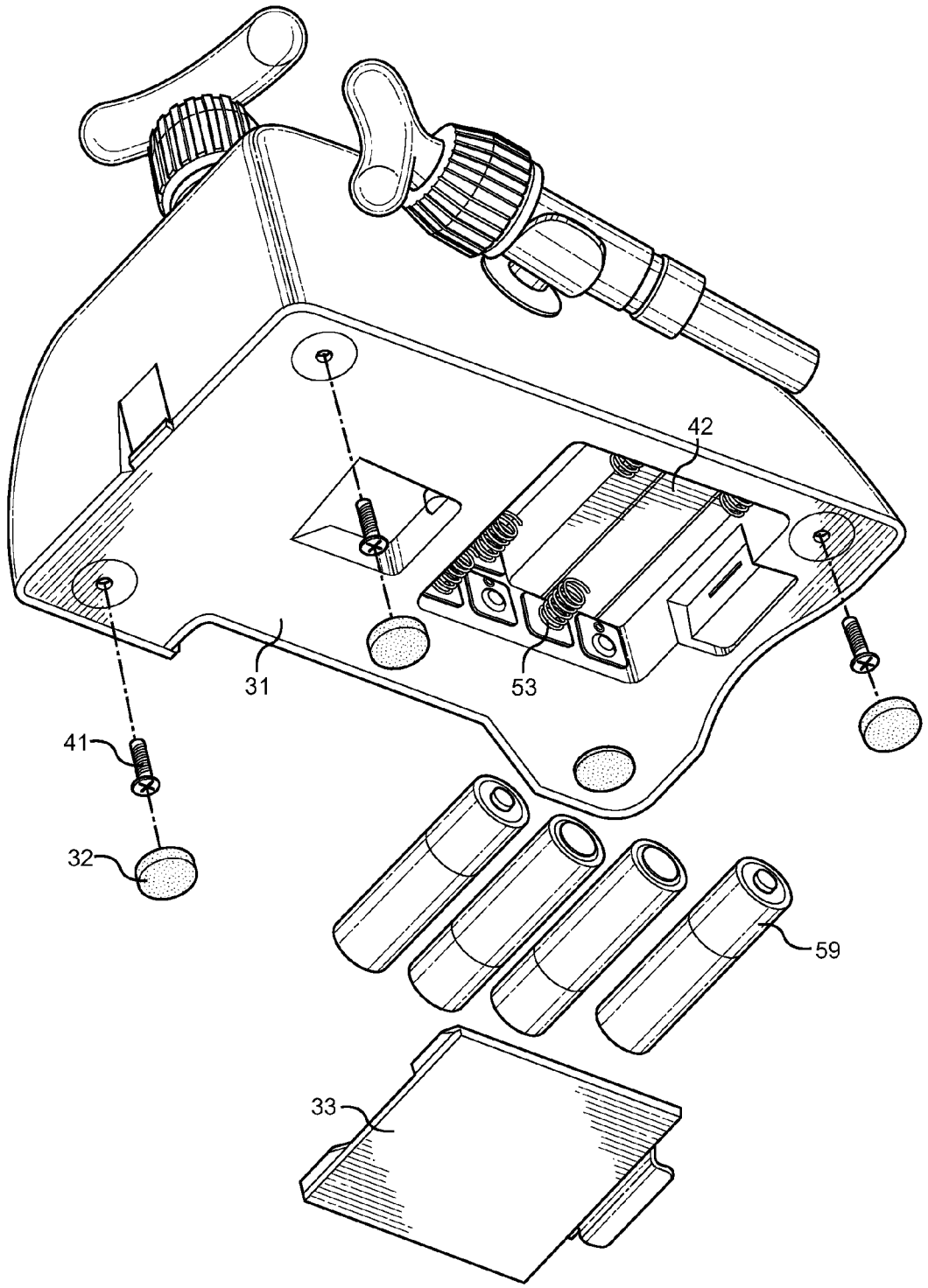

FIG. 4

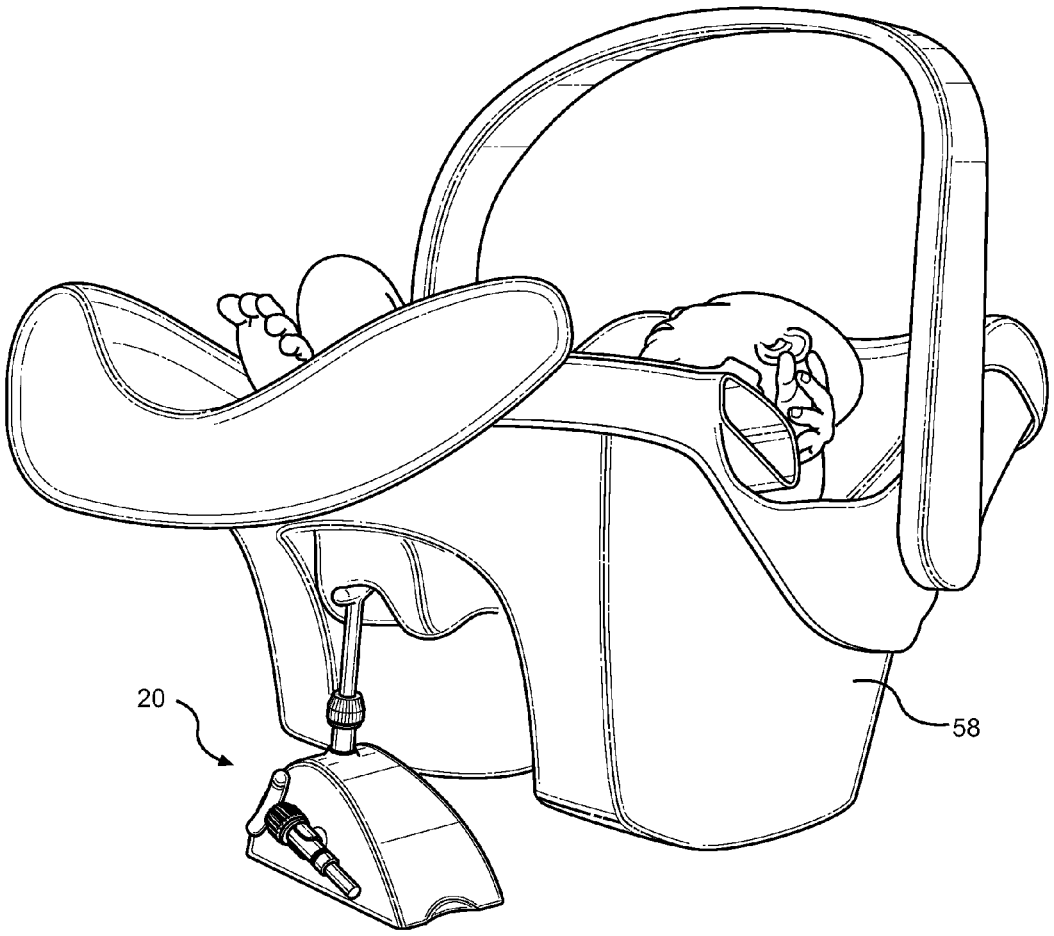

FIG. 5

AUTOMATIC BABY CARRIER ROCKING DEVICE

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/861,835 filed on Aug. 2, 2013. The above identified patent application is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety to provide continuity of disclosure.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a baby carrier rocking device. More specifically, the present invention pertains to an automatic baby carrier rocking device that comprises a housing with an imbedded motor, which is used to actuate an elongated arm that rocks a baby carrier in a rhythmic motion. The present invention features a compact, portable design that is suitable for use with a wide variety of baby carriers.

When a baby is a newborn, many parents and caregivers cradle the baby in their arms and rock them in a back and forth motion, creating a bond between the baby and the parents or caregivers. Additionally, activities such as rocking can help stimulate a baby's vestibular system, which improves a baby's sense of balance. Rocking a baby in a rhythmic back and forth motion also helps to soothe and comfort the baby, because the rocking motion simulates the life in the mother's womb before the baby is born. As such, many parents and caregivers regularly simulate such rocking motion to induce the baby to sleep.

In order to facilitate rocking a baby, devices such as rocking chairs or gliders are used. A rocking chair includes a chair with two curved bands attached to the bottom of the legs, connecting the legs on each side to each other. The rockers contact the floor at two points, giving the user the ability to rock back and forth by shifting his or her weight or pushing lightly with his or her feet. Conversely, gliders slide back and forth on a fixed track instead of rocking. Alternatively, a baby may be placed in a car seat or a baby carrier while the base is gently rocked back and forth.

Traditional methods of rocking a baby, however, are inconvenient for many parents and caregivers. Rocking a baby in a back and forth motion requires the parents and caregivers to manually operate a device and constantly attend to the baby. Additionally, existing devices for swinging or rocking a baby in a back and forth motion have limited use and are often bulky and costly. Thus, a convenient, portable, and versatile device is needed that provides a rocking motion to a baby carrier.

The present invention provides an automatic baby carrier rocking device that is designed for use with various types of baby carriers. The present invention comprises a housing with an imbedded motor that is connected to an arm so that the arm moves in a linear reciprocating motion. The present invention is adapted to rock a baby carrier so as to slightly tip the carrier backwards at a regular interval and allowing it to come back to its starting position each time, thereby providing a rhythmic rocking motion. In some embodiments, the present invention may further comprise an MP3 player to play a pre-recorded sound or music. Use of the present invention allows for parents and caregivers to rock a baby carrier without manually simulating a rocking motion. In this way, the present invention provides convenience to the user while improving versatility of its use.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

Devices have been disclosed in the prior art that relate to baby carrier rockers, and further to those emphasizing a hands-free method for rocking various baby carriers. These include devices that have been patented and published in patent application publications. Some of these patents describe a housing member with an imbedded motor, wherein a top portion of the housing member is adapted to support a baby carrier thereon. Other patents describe a baby carrier support with a curved lower surface that allows the baby carrier support to rock. These devices, however, do not disclose a compact and portable automatic baby carrier rocking device that may be used with a wide variety of baby carriers without mounting the carrier on the device. The following is a list of devices deemed most relevant to the present disclosure, which are herein described for the purposes of highlighting and differentiating the unique aspects of the present invention, and further highlighting the drawbacks existing in the prior art.

For example, U.S. Published Patent Application Number 2012/0036635 to Lapointe discloses a portable baby rocking system that comprises a housing with an imbedded motor and a frame attached to the housing. The frame is adapted to support a baby carrier thereon, wherein the baby carrier may be secured onto the frame via a strap system. While the device of Lapointe provides portable means to rock various baby carriers, it requires a user to secure the baby carrier onto the device in order to provide a rocking motion. In contrast, the present invention does not need to be attached to a baby carrier in order to provide a rocking motion thereto. The present invention comprises an elongated arm that is actuated by the motor to push the baby carrier as it extends in an upward direction. Accordingly, the present invention is operable when simply placed near the baby carrier.

Similarly, U.S. Pat. No. 7,891,736 to Sims discloses a mechanized baby carrier rocker comprising a base member and a motor that is attached to a tray member. The motor is attached to the tray member via one or more springs. The motor and the tray member are positioned on the base member via a shaft. In operation, a baby carrier is positioned in the tray and the motor is engaged to produce and maintain a rocking motion in the baby carrier. While the Sims device is adapted to provide a rocking motion in the baby carrier, the Sims device is limited in that the entire baby carrier must rest on the tray in order for the device to operate. Accordingly, the Sims device may not be accommodate baby carriers of various sizes and shapes. In contrast, the present invention comprises an automatic baby carrier rocking device that can be used with any variety of baby carriers. The present invention does not need to be permanently affixed to an existing baby carrier in order to operate, thereby increasing the versatility of a single baby carrier rocking device with regard to its usage.

Another device, U.S. Published Patent Application Number 2011/0260507 to Parness discloses a convertible infant rocker comprising a frame and a support assembly connected thereto. The support assembly includes a cradle, defining a cavity therein. The cavity may be adapted to receive a liner therein, wherein the liner is engaged to the cradle. Optionally, the liner may be replaced with a conventional car seat for use in a vehicle. The frame is configured to impart a rocking or swaying motion to the seat in response to movement of the infant, or in response to a light push by a parent or caregiver. Accordingly, the device of Parness differs from the present

invention in that it does not comprise a motor to provide an automatic rocking motion of a baby carrier. The motor of the present invention eliminates the need for the parent or caregiver to constantly rock the baby carrier, thereby providing a convenient and hands-free method to rock the baby carrier.

U.S. Pat. No. 7,485,086 to Dickie discloses an infant rocking assembly comprising a housing with a top, base, and an imbedded motor therebetween. The housing further includes a sound-producing device for playing music. The device is adapted to move in a manner which is synchronized with the music. The top of the housing is adapted to support a baby carrier thereon. In this way, the device is positioned under the baby carrier in its operative state. In contrast, the present invention comprises an elongated arm that is removably connected to a compact housing member having an imbedded motor therein. When in use, the present invention is placed at or near the foot of a baby carrier so that the baby carrier is not resting on the device. This enables the elongated arm to extend and retract, thereby pushing the baby carrier.

U.S. Pat. No. 5,588,164 to Proulx discloses an infant carrier seat support comprising a housing member having a recessed top surface and a curved bottom surface. The top surface is adapted to receive an infant carrier seat therein. The bottom surface is adapted to rock on a generally flat support surface. Accordingly, the Proulx device lacks means to automatically rock the infant carrier seat attached thereto. In contrast, the present invention comprises a motor for automatically rocking a baby carrier. In this way, the present invention provides parents or caregivers with a hands-free way to rock the baby carrier.

Finally, U.S. Pat. No. 6,250,654 to Willis discloses a combination car seat and stroller assembly with an integrated rocking mechanism. The Willis device comprises docking supports having a spring motor mounted thereon. The docking supports are adapted to hold a car seat via one or more mounting plates. Additionally, the car seat is securely held in place via a seat support pin. While Willis discloses a device that automatically rocks a baby carrier, the purpose and intent of the Willis device differ from the present invention in that the Willis device is intended for use with a stroller having a removable car seat. In contrast, the present invention is used with a wide variety of baby carriers resting on a horizontal surface, as it is not necessary to rock a baby carrier while the seat is mounted on a stroller. The movement of a stroller can help calm the babies and induce them to sleep, eliminating the need for a rocking device. Additionally, as the present invention is intended to provide a hands-free way to rock the baby carrier, it is not required when a parent or a caregiver is pushing the stroller.

These prior art devices have several known drawbacks. These devices are bulky and cannot be operated without securing a baby carrier onto the device. Additionally, the prior art devices are designed for use with limited types of baby carriers. It is therefore submitted that the present invention substantially diverges in design elements from the prior art, which overcomes the disadvantages of the prior art devices, and consequently it is clear that there is a need in the art for an improvement to existing baby carrier rockers. In this regard the instant invention substantially fulfills these needs.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In view of the foregoing disadvantages inherent in the known types of baby carrier rockers now present in the prior art, the present invention provides a new improvement to an automatic baby carrier rocking device wherein the same can be utilized for providing a continuous rocking motion of a baby carrier to help soothe a baby.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a new and improved automatic baby carrier rocking device that has all of the advantages of the prior art and none of the disadvantages.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a new and improved automatic baby carrier rocking device having a compact housing member with an imbedded motor that is adapted to actuate a removably connected elongated arm to rock a baby carrier.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a new and improved automatic baby carrier rocking device having a speed control that allows a user to change the speed of the movement of the elongated arm to rock a baby carrier.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a new and improved automatic baby carrier rocking device that provides a hands-free method to rock a baby carrier.

Still yet another object of the present invention is to provide a new and improved automatic baby carrier rocking device that utilizes gravity and momentum to rock a baby carrier.

Still yet another object of the present invention is to provide a new and improved automatic baby carrier rocking device having a housing member that comprises complex shapes and decorative features.

Still yet another object of the present invention is to provide a new and improved automatic baby carrier rocking device that may be used with a wide variety of baby carriers.

Still yet another object of the present invention is to provide a new and improved automatic baby carrier rocking device having an MP3 player and a speaker to play a pre-recorded sound.

Other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DRAWINGS

Although the characteristic features of this invention will be particularly pointed out in the claims, the invention itself and in manner in which it may be made and used may be better understood after a review of the following description, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein like numeral annotations are provided throughout.

FIG. **1** shows a front perspective view of an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **2** shows a rear perspective view of an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **3** shows a top exploded view of the present invention.

FIG. **4** shows a bottom exploded view of the present invention.

FIG. **5** shows a view of the present invention in use.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Reference is made herein to the attached drawings. Like reference numerals are used throughout the drawings to depict like or similar elements of the automatic baby carrier rocking device. For the purposes of presenting a brief and clear description of the present invention, the preferred embodiment will be discussed as utilized for providing a continuous rocking motion of a baby carrier to help soothe a baby. The figures are intended for representative purposes only and should not be considered to be limiting in any respect.

Referring now to FIGS. **1** and **2**, there is shown a front perspective view and a rear perspective view of the present invention, respectively. The automatic rocking device **20** as shown in the illustrated embodiment comprises a housing **21** having an arcuate top wall **22**, a first side wall **23** opposite a second side wall **34**, leaving the bottom portion of the housing **21** open and defining an interior volume. The housing **21** of the present invention comprises rigid material such as plastic, metal, or other suitable material. The interior volume of the housing **21** includes an MP3 player, a speaker, an internal power source, an imbedded motor, and necessary internal circuitry to execute the motor, the MP3 player, and the speaker. The interior volume of the housing **21** may further comprise a power switch and a speed control that controls operation of the motor and speed of the movement of the elongated arm **26**, as well as a music switch that turns the MP3 player and the speaker on or off. The rocking device **20** of the present invention may be also externally powered via an AC/DC power adapter port **39** disposed in the back portion of the top wall **22** of the housing **21**.

The top wall **22** of the housing **21** comprises an aperture **24** for receiving an extension arm **25** therethrough. The extension arm **25** is connected to an elongated arm **26** that is adapted to extend and retract. The elongated arm **26** has a circular cross section with a diameter that is substantially uniform throughout its length. The elongated arm **26** comprises a first end **27** and a second end **28**, wherein the first end **27** is removably inserted through an annular joint **29** so that the elongated arm **26** is in a substantially vertical position. The second end **28** of the elongated arm **26** is substantially straight and perpendicular to the rest of the elongated arm **26**, thereby forming a T-shape. In some embodiments, the second end **28** may be curved so that it forms a Y-shape. Additionally, the second end **28** of the elongated arm **26** may comprise a padded material or a coating for a smooth finish. In some embodiments, the first side wall **23** may comprise a clip **30** for an additional elongated arm, a joint, and an extension arm. The additional elongated arm, the joint, and the extension arm are substantially equal in shape and size to the elongated arm **26**, the joint **29**, and the extension arm **25** on the top wall **22** of the housing **21**. The clip **30** may be press fitted to an aperture disposed on the first side wall **23**. The clip **30** may comprise a U-shaped portion that is adapted to hold the additional elongated arm.

The housing **21** further comprises a base **31** attached thereto at the open bottom portion thereof. The base **31** spans the open bottom portion of the housing **21** and comprises a side wall **40** that extend upward therefrom. The side wall **40** is configured to fit in the cutout of the second side wall **34** of the housing **21**. The side wall **40** comprises a power switch **36**, a speed control switch **27**, a music switch **38**, and concentric cutouts **35** for the speaker. The base **31** also comprises a battery door **33** hingedly attached thereto, wherein the battery door **33** provides access to the batteries in the interior volume of the housing **21**. The base **31** is attached to the housing **21** by means of fasteners, such as screws. Each of the fasteners are covered by a rubber foot **32** having a disc shape.

In other embodiments, the housing of the present invention may be substantially cube-shaped or may be in the shape of any type of animal or cartoon figures, toys, lettering, numbering, symbols, and the like. Without limitation, examples of animal shapes include turtles, butterflies, whales, and lady bugs. Accordingly, the arm may comprise different shapes and designs to match the design or theme of the housing. For instance, the housing may be in a shape of a whale and the elongated arm may be in a shape of a whale's spout. The specific shape and design of the housing, and the elongated arm, however, is not of primary relevance with regard to the intent of the present invention, which portends to provide an improved automatic baby carrier rocking device that can rock a variety of baby carriers in a back and forth motion.

Referring now to FIG. **3**, there is shown a top exploded view of the present invention. The housing is adapted to enclose the electrical components of the present invention and support the elongated arm **26** and its related components. The first end **27** of the elongated arm **26** is inserted through the joint **29**, which rests above the housing. Thereafter, the first end **27** of the elongated arm **26** is inserted into the extension arm **25**, which comprises an upper end **56** that rests above the housing and a lower end **57** that is adapted to be disposed in the interior volume of the housing. The extension arm **25** helps guide the elongated arm **26** move from a fully extended position to a retracted position. In the illustrated embodiment, each of the upper end **56** of the extension arm **25** and the interior surface of the joint **29** comprise threaded elements therearound. In this way, the joint **29** can be screwed onto the upper end **56** of the extension arm **25**.

The lower end **57** of the extension arm **25** is inserted in a sleeve **55** having a spring **45** therein. In this way, the sleeve **55** is spring biased. The sleeve **55** comprises a cylindrical portion having an upper and a lower end. The lower end of the cylindrical portion is slideably disposed in the protruding portion **63** of the base **31**. The upper end of the cylindrical portion comprises a pair of arms at opposing ends thereof. Each of the arms of the sleeve **55** is connected to a rear gear **46** via a piston arm **52**. One or both of the rear gear **46** is connected to a front gear **62**, and each of the rear **46** and front gear **62** is actuated by means of a motor **60** that is connected to a motor bracket **61**.

In operation, the motor **60** rotates the gears **46**, **62** so that the piston arm **52** and the sleeve **55** can move up and down at regular intervals. Because the sleeve **55** is spring biased, the movement of the sleeve **55** also moves the extension arm **25** and the elongated arm **26** in a gentle up and down motion. When the elongated arm **26** is in an upward motion, the elongated arm **26** is in a fully extended position. As the elongated arm **26** slides back down by gravity, the second end **28** of the elongated arm **26** rests on the joint **29** and the elongated arm **26** is in a retracted position. When the elongated arm **26** is in a retracted position, the process is repeated so that the elongated arm **26** is moved in an upward motion, into a fully extended position. The speed of the movement of the elongated arm **26** may be controlled via the speed control **37** that is disposed on the printed circuit board (PCB) **51**.

The interior volume of the housing may further comprise an MP3 player **43** and a speaker **44** therein. The MP3 player **43** is capable of storing pre-recorded audio or music clip that may comprise a lullaby or the like. The speaker **44** is adapted to transmit the pre-recorded audio or music clip. The MP3 player **43** may be operated by a music switch **38**, which is also disposed on the PCB **51**. In this way, the MP3 player **43** and the speaker **44** may be separately operated from the motor **60**.

The motor **60**, MP3 player **43**, and the speaker **44** may also be internally powered via batteries that are disposed in the battery compartment **42**. The battery compartment **42** comprises a pair of battery holders **53** for each of the batteries therein. The batteries are connected to the PCB **51** having a transistor **47**, a plurality of connectors **48**, a DC converter **49**, and a plurality of diodes **50**, such as a semiconductor diode. The PCB **51** is connected to the base **31** by means of fasteners.

Referring now to FIG. **4**, there is shown a bottom exploded view of the present invention. The base **31** comprises a battery compartment **42** that is accessible via the battery door **33** removably attached thereto. The battery door **33** creates a

contiguous surface when attached to the base **31**. The battery compartment **42** is constructed to fit a plurality of standard size batteries **59** therein. Each of the terminal ends of the batteries **59** is adapted to contact the battery holder **53** that is affixed to the battery compartment **42**. The battery holder **53** comprises coiled spring wire that press against the terminal ends of the battery **59**. Alternatively, the battery holder **53** may comprise flat tabs. In this way, the battery holder **53** makes electrical contact with the terminal ends of the battery **59**.

The base **31** is attached to the housing by means of fasteners **41**. The base **31** comprises a threaded aperture at each of the corners thereof, wherein each of the aperture is adapted to receive a fastener **41** therethrough. Once the fasteners **41** are secured in the base **31**, the fasteners are covered **41** with rubber feet **32**. The rubber feet **32** help prevent the rocking device from slipping or skidding when in use.

Referring now to FIG. **5**, there is shown a view of the present invention in use. In operation, the present rocking device **20** is placed near the underside of the foot of a baby carrier **58** that is resting on a horizontal surface. The bottom wall of the present rocking device **20** comprises non-slip rubber feet so that the device is prevented from shifting during use. The motor is adapted to drive the elongated arm in an upward direction so that the second end of the arm contacts a portion of the baby carrier **58**, thereby tipping it slightly backward. Thereafter, the gravity pulls the elongated arm back down to its starting position, as the baby carrier **58** also comes back to its starting position. When the elongated arm is retracted, the motor drives the elongated arm in an upward direction, repeating the process. The extension and retraction of the elongated arm repeats at regular intervals in order to facilitate a continuous rocking motion of the baby carrier **58**.

It is therefore submitted that the instant invention has been shown and described in what is considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments. It is recognized, however, that departures may be made within the scope of the invention and that obvious modifications will occur to a person skilled in the art. With respect to the above description then, it is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention, to include variations in size, materials, shape, form, function and manner of operation, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

Therefore, the foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.

I claim:

1. An automatic baby carrier rocking device, comprising:

a housing having a top wall, a first side wall opposite a second side wall, and a base, forming an interior volume for enclosing a motor and a power source;

said top wall having an aperture;

an elongated arm having a first end and a second end;

said first end of said elongated arm operably connected to said motor and extending through said aperture such that said elongated arm is in a substantially vertical orientation;

said second end of said elongated arm adapted to engage an underside of a baby carrier;

wherein said elongated arm is actuated by said motor to move from a retracted position to an extended position at a regular interval;

wherein said first end of said elongated arm is removably inserted through an annular joint that is removably secured to an extension arm;

said annular joint disposed above said aperture of said housing;

said extension arm inserted in a sleeve disposed in said interior volume of said housing;

said sleeve having a pair of arms that are connected to gears by means of piston arms;

said gears being driven by said motor;

wherein said sleeve and said piston arms move in an upward direction and in a downward direction as said gears rotate;

wherein said sleeve and said piston arms are assisted by gravity when moving in said downward direction.

2. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **1**, further comprising a speed control switch that controls the speed of the movement of said elongated arm.

3. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **1**, further comprising a power switch.

4. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **1**, further comprising an MP3 player and a speaker enclosed in said interior volume of said housing.

5. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **4**, further comprising a music switch to operate said MP3 player and said speaker.

6. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **1**, wherein:

said first side wall comprises an aperture having a clip secured thereto;

said clip comprises a U-shaped portion to hold said elongated arm.

7. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **1**, wherein said power source comprises one or more batteries.

8. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **1**, wherein said base further comprises:

a battery compartment having a plurality of battery holders;

a battery door removably attached to said base to enclose one or more batteries in said battery compartment.

9. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **1**, wherein said sleeve is spring biased.

10. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **1**, wherein said sleeve pushes said extension arm and said elongated arm in an upward direction.

11. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **1**, further comprising a power adapter port disposed on said housing.

12. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **1**, wherein said second end of said elongated arm comprises a T-shaped to engage an underside of a baby carrier.

13. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **1**, wherein:

said base is configured to cover an open bottom portion of said housing;

said base is secured to said open bottom portion of said housing by means of fasteners.

14. The baby carrier rocking device of claim **13**, wherein said base further comprises:

a plurality of rubber feet;

each of said plurality of rubber feet placed over each of said fasteners.

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